

# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## Tomb of high priest Caiaphus discovered

By Jerry Vardaman

First of a three-part series

*(Editor's note: Many great discoveries are by accident. A shepherd throws a rock into a cave in Qumran and shatters a large pottery jar. The Dead Sea Scrolls have been found. A heavy grader doing excavation work uncovers a tomb. Behold, what have we found?)*

Jerry Vardaman, professor, Cobb Institute of Archaeology at Mississippi State University, has made dozens of trips to Israel in his work and has examined many ancient sources to help us understand the culture, customs and historical events of Jesus' day. His study of the tomb of the high priest in the time of Jesus helps us get into the "thought world and mind" of Caiaphus.)

When John Robinson spoke to his flock of believers who were departing from Delft Harbor, Holland, on their way to the New World, he challenged them with the message that they should never be afraid of new truth, saying that God "hath more light" to break forth from his Word for their edification and understanding. We share on this page a discovery of this type.

Since the discovery brings new focus on a key personality involved with the death of Jesus, attention must be given to other sources which help us to see him in a clearer light.

In December 1990, the tomb of Caiaphas was discovered in Jerusalem. It was located about a mile (as the crow flies) south of the old walled city of Jerusalem. The exact location of the tomb is in the northern section of a suburb of Jerusalem, known today as Talpith.

### Contents of the Tomb

The Caiaphas tomb was discovered by accident. A heavy piece of engineering equipment, while moving over the underground chamber, placed such a heavy load on the roof of the tomb that a small section of its ceiling collapsed and revealed its location. Zvi Greenhut, of the Israel Antiquities Authority (located in the Rockefeller Museum), was assigned the task of excavating and publishing the excavation report of the tomb. He was assisted by Ronnie Reich, who was assigned the task of translating the ancient inscriptions discovered in the burial chamber. Reich is a former student of N. Avigad, who, until his recent death, was the fore-

most student on ancient Hebrew scripts.

Over 60 people were originally buried in the tomb. Approximately a dozen coffins (some fragments and some entire) for the bones (called ossuaries) still remained in the tomb when cleared by the excavator. Experts who deal with ancient bones determined that many children were buried there, besides many elderly persons, in ancient times. The most important

an extremely rare name). Typical pottery and other objects relating to the early Roman period were discovered: perfume bottles, cooking pots, coins dating to A. D. 43, lamps, and glassware.

Such objects established beyond a shadow of a doubt that the tomb is authentic and was actively used in the first century A. D., when Caiaphas officiated as high priest.

Zvi Greenhut has been commendably cautious in connecting

examination of tombs and related research, they insisted that the tomb be reclosed, which has since been done. The bones, after study, were reburied on the Mount of Olives.

### A brief look at the Sadducees

In Jesus' day, Jews were not agreed among themselves about theological interpretations. Concisely stated, various schools of thought existed (we omit to dis-

one another and believed that God would reward their merits and daily works (to the point that one could obligate God by carrying out perfunctory duties, etc.). While they believed in observing the Sabbath, they also invented ways to circumvent its demands. In reaching their theological and religious judgments, they were more lenient than the Sadducees.

### The Essenes

This school went beyond the Pharisees in matters of legalism, and many of them withdrew into the desert (especially around modern Qumran) so as to serve God more acceptably and without worldly encumbrances. They were more strict than the ordinary Pharisees in keeping the Sabbath. For example, if a man fell into the well on the Sabbath day, an obedient Essene could not assist the person from escaping his death. An Essene could not lift a rope or a ladder down to the doomed victim on the Sabbath.

### The Sadducees

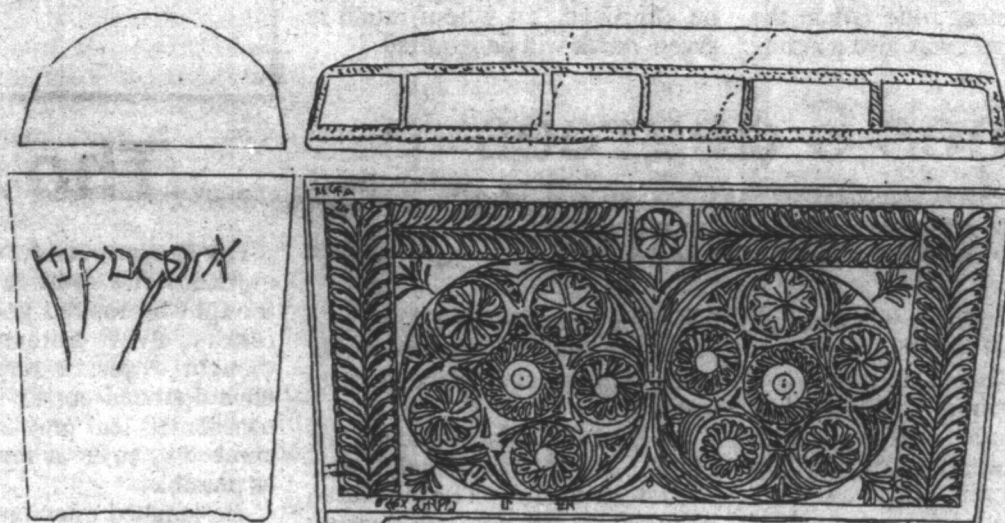
This school of thought was not large in number; yet Sadducees were wealthy and powerful. Many aristocratic priests shared Sadducean views, especially the upper levels of priestly authorities, such as the high priestly families. The Sadducees rejected the inspiration of the prophets and the writings of the Old Testament, leaving only the books of Moses (the first five books of the Old Testament) to be inspired. They believed neither in angels, nor in the resurrection, nor in life after death. It is not overstatement to say they were more concerned with securing wealth and political power than in observing religious duties or being kind toward others. They were brutal in reaching their legalistic judgments and in inflicting maximum legal penalties on those being tried. All of their brutal tactics were exercised on Jesus when they condemned him to death. Many other historical facets of Jesus' relationships with Sadducean leaders are better understood when we understand their basic theological viewpoints and assumptions.

Now that Caiaphas emerges from obscurity by the discovery of his tomb, we can learn much about him by re-examining other ancient sources which can supply new insights on him.

### The Pharisees

This school accepted the divine inspiration of all of the Old Testament books. They believed in life after death, in the resurrection, in angels, and they were cordial with

### THE OSSUARY OF CAIAPHUS



*Jewish burial customs in the time of Caiaphas required that a corpse be laid on a ledge or shelf in a tomb constructed from rock. After waiting about one year for the body to decompose, relatives returned to the tomb and placed the remains in a coffin-like bone chest called an ossuary.*

*Since more than one set of family remains might be placed in the same ossuary, names and relationships were often inscribed on the outside. The Aramaic inscription (left drawing) on the end of this ossuary from the recently discovered tomb of Caiaphas reads, "Joseph, son of Caiaphas." The rear side of the ossuary (not shown) also states, "Joseph, son of Caiaphas, is buried in this ossuary." The partial remains of six individuals were found in this chest.*

*The decorated front of the ossuary (right drawing) contains twelve floral or solar designs, possibly depicting the twelve tribes of Israel. The raised, separate design centered above the twelve may represent the tribe of Levi, of which Caiaphas was a member. Research indicates that such ornate ossuaries were extremely rare. (Copyrighted illustrations used by permission of Jerry Vardaman.)*

coffin was very elaborate, containing a few bone fragments (in a very deteriorated condition) of a 60-year-old man, in addition to the remains of others.

The 60-year-old person was apparently the notorious high priest, Joseph Caiaphas, since that name was found twice on this same ossuary. Personal names found in the tomb are typically Jewish and commonly used in that period: Miriam (= Mary), daughter of Simeon; Salome; Shem (= an abbreviation for Simon or Simeon); and of course, Joseph, son of Caiaphas (although "Caiaphas" is

the newly-found tomb with that famous person who is mentioned in the New Testament. He has avoided all forms of sensationalism. The identification seems to be quite respectable and welcome because of the new light it affords modern students of the Bible on this mysterious person named Caiaphas.

When the extremely orthodox religious party (known as the Hasidim) learned of the discovery of Caiaphas' tomb, they brought intense pressure on the Antiquities Authority to cease work on the tomb. Objecting to the scientific

cuss here the Zealots, except to say that they represented extreme views, with their adherents not hesitating to resort to violence if necessary to accomplish their political objectives). The following summary results from using the writings of Josephus, the ancient historian as well as other ancient sources:

Vardaman is professor, Cobb Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University, Starkville.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

## Big in Mississippi

Martin Bradley, of the Research Department of the Sunday School Board, reports that Southern Baptists number about 3 out of every 10 individuals in Mississippi. About 70% of the Magnolia State is said to be "churched." Utah (80%) is tops; and Rhode Island (77%), North Dakota (76%), Alabama (71%), and Louisiana (71%) follow. The lowest states in "churched" people are Nevada, Oregon, and Alaska, each with 32%.

If you count all Baptists in Mississippi, they would be about 40% of the population. With a population of 2.6 million, we have 650,000 Southern Baptists, about 350,000 black Baptists, and a possible 100,000 Independent, Landmark, and others. J. B. Gambrell reportedly said, "Baptists are many but not much." Was he right? The leading faith at Parchman prison is also Baptist. The moral tone of our state hardly measures up to minimum levels.

Elected officials in increasing number follow after greed and betray the people who elected

them. The legalization of liquor, which would solve most financial difficulties according to exponents, has made a few rich and impoverished many. Now the gambling craze, in a blitzkrieg attack, tells us of unemployment decrease, money to solve state and local government financial woes, but say little of increasing crime and deterioration of community life.

Counting all church members in Mississippi it totals about 2,000,000 people. If we were of one accord in opposing evil we could set the moral tone of our state. However, you find "churchmen" selling liquor, voting in favor of gambling, favoring abortion, and stepping on the down-trodden to gain an advantage. Our society is bent toward violence with sin being the taproot.

We had all of this in Mississippi's earlier days. From Natchez Under-the-Hill, along the river ports, and the robber-infested Natchez Trace, violence and the criminal element rode tall in the saddle. But there was also a strong

spiritual force that helped to shackle this element and churches, Christian schools, and moral men prevailed.

Does it now appear that many churches have capitulated? Locked doors, protective bars, and expensive security systems are the norm, along with screaming for the government to do something. No protective system can stop the real problem. Man's heart is desperately wicked and we are creating the atmosphere where it can express itself.

Let the church rise up and be the church, not conforming but transforming. With sure certainty we are becoming more like the world than the world is becoming like the church. Joshua had to take a stand. "Who is on the Lord's side? As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Gideon had to reduce his forces to 300 ere they became effective. The church should stand for righteousness or give up the name "Christian." Some 70% of Mississippi is said to be churched. To whom much is given, much will be required.



## Professor outlines 6 degrees of church-state separation

COLUMBIA, Mo. (ABP) — The debate in America over religious liberty has more than two sides, according to Carl Esbeck, professor of law at the University of Missouri-Columbia and an expert in church-state issues.

Esbeck has written an academic paper to outline six views on church-state separation. One version of the copyrighted paper is published in the fall 1990 issue of the Journal of Faith and Mission of Southeastern Seminary.

Here's a summary of Esbeck's six types:

— Strict separationists desire a secular state, meaning a state that is not religious but not hostile toward religion. They may be religious or non-religious people "who genuinely fear discrimination, ...should conservative Christian majorities be positioned to influence in any serious way matters of public law."

— Freewill separationists also desire a neutral state but do not want the state to exclude religious organizations from equal participation with other private-sector groups in social programs. "A free church in a free state" is a com-

mon slogan of this viewpoint, which believes religious pluralism is good for religious liberty.

— Institutional separationists view government and the church as distinct institutions ordained by God for different purposes. They desire a state where government has a benevolent attitude toward religion. They believe the danger of establishing civil religion in America currently is overstated. They also believe the nation must be supported by moral values that can only be provided by their religion.

— Structural pluralists emphasize liberty to follow one's worldview, whether based in religion or philosophy. Religious organizations should receive the same government aid as other non-political structures, they reason, because government is to distribute goods in a way that does not discriminate on the basis of worldviews.

— Non-preferentialists believe it is permissible for government to favor religion in general, so long as it does not favor one religion in particular. However, those professing no religious belief would not be entitled to the same. Under this

view, for example, all classes in a parochial school except those that teach religion could receive state support.

— Restorationists maintain the United States was founded as a Christian nation. They believe both church and state are divinely ordained to specific roles but should reinforce each other. Although they would not establish a national church, they do believe government should be explicitly Christian in its creed.



## The savored salt

His face was ruddy, creased and marked. His mother may have thought he looked good but few others ever entertained the thought. A plastic surgeon would have operated on his face free of charge. His hair gray and thin was combed to cover as much territory as possible.

He laughed often and the infectious grin made it a bit easier to look at him. Horn-rimmed glasses twisted over his nose; sideburns raced down his face ending with pork chop-shaped abruptness.

He sat in the committee meeting occasionally taking notes with a ball-point pen advertising Harvey's Feed, Seed, and Fertilizer Co. His collar was clean but it's doubtful that it was ever neat. Each time his double chin dropped, the collar tips folded like the wings of a Navy F4U. He did have on a neat tie, perfectly matched with his attire. Apparently his wife had selected it.

Worldly goods had never been a major part of his life. He didn't require much; he didn't desire much. Happiness, he believed, comes by what you can do without, rather than by what you acquire.

He had worked hard all his life and callused hands gave testimony

that he continued in that lifestyle. He had supported missions all his life. His Lottie Moon offering was more important than a new suit and filling out his weekly offering envelope was a joyful part of his life. Through the years he had instilled much of the same philosophy into the lives of his children. He wouldn't leave them very much, but there would be a legacy: an example of faith, hope and love. This made him wealthy as any corporation board member, maybe more so.

Slowly it dawned upon me that I was facing the salt of the earth. I greatly admired him and loved him like a brother. Man looks on the outside appearance but God has another standard in measuring men. Across the years his church had come to think as he thought. They took missions seriously. "That will not cut into our mission giving, will it?" was often heard when someone proposed a large expenditure. He loved his people and they responded. A faith so simple, yet so-called wise men would stumble over it. His outward appearance didn't matter any more. The inner glow had changed all of that.

— GH

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## SBC's oldest missionary, Floy Jacob, dies at 101

Floy Christine Jacob, 101, Southern Baptists' oldest retired missionary, died Aug. 14 of cardiac arrest at Clay County Medical Center, West Point.

Memorial services were held 2 p.m. Aug. 16 at First Church, West Point. Jacob, a Simpson, Ky., native, was FMB missionary to China from 1922-40. Her main role was that of missionary homemaker.

She was the widow of Robert Augustus Jacob.

"Mother's total concern was that it was more important to be a homemaker than a career woman, and that's what she taught," said her daughter, Mary J. Ingram of West Point. "She lived what she believed so much that you lived it

also; I've done two mission trips. Someday I hope to continue the love she had in her work.

"Mother always said that the Chinese people were very loving, (that) she planted her heart in China," said Ingram.

"She was not a preacher, but her loving nature allowed her to share so much. She was always sweet, happy, and full of fun. We don't mourn her loss. As Christians, we know where she is," continued Ingram.

Other survivors include three daughters, 12 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in care of First Church, West Point.

## College presidents protest New Orleans degree plan

NASHVILLE (BP) — An undergraduate degree program to start this month at New Orleans Seminary has drawn strong criticism from state Baptist colleges and universities and a request to the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee for intervention.

New Orleans will begin a bachelor of arts and bachelor of general studies degrees when its fall term starts Aug. 25. The programs are for seminary students age 25 and older, the first of their kind offered by any SBC seminary, according to New Orleans officials.

Thirty-one Baptist college and university presidents have asked the Executive Committee to intervene in the New Orleans proposal because, college presidents allege, it conflicts with the seminary's program statement.

Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee president, has agreed with the colleges' protest and has written New Orleans Seminary's president, Landrum P. Leavell II, expressing his opinion the action will violate the seminary's program statement. Bennett told Leavell in a July 20 letter that the matter will be on the agenda of the SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville, Sept. 21-23.

Bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention give the Executive Committee a "watchdog" responsibility in matters of program statements of the various SBC agencies.

Presidents of the 31 Baptist colleges and universities sent a letter June 25 to Leavell asking the seminary not to implement the bachelor degrees. Earlier, on June 22, James W. Edwards, president of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, sent a letter evidencing concern about the new program and

seeking dialogue with New Orleans about possibly having baccalaureate programs offered by William Carey on the seminary campus.

A number of letters were exchanged between Leavell and Edwards in the ensuing weeks. Finally, in a July 9 letter to Bennett, Edwards, and Robert L. Lynn, president of Louisiana College in Pineville, asked the Executive Committee to intervene in the dispute "in stopping a violation of the SBC program assignment for New Orleans ...."

"There has been no indication of a recognition on the part of the seminary administration of this violation," the two presidents said in the letter. "Therefore, we are calling upon you to act to maintain adherence to the program authorized by the program statement approved by the SBC in 1979."

In his July 20 letter to Leavell, Bennett said "it is my judgement that the program statement does not authorize the six Southern Baptist seminaries to offer bachelor degrees. I therefore believe the bachelor degree program of New Orleans Seminary is in violation of the SBC program statement."

Bennett also acknowledged in his letter "there may be other seminaries which offer similar degrees."

"At the same time, I recognize the fact that there are state Baptist colleges which offer studies in the area of 'theological education.' It is my feeling that these matters need to be discussed by appropriate representatives."

Since the matter is scheduled for the September Executive Committee meeting in Nashville, Leavell indicated to Baptist Press he did not plan to make further comment until then.

## Early deadlines set

Early deadlines will be observed for the Baptist Record's Sept. 10 issue. Due to the Labor Day holiday, news copy to be published in that issue will be accepted no later than Tuesday, Sept. 1.

Advertising space reservations should be made and copy to the Baptist Record offices no later than Monday, Aug. 31.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

# The Baptist Record

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## Some ACTS affiliates upset with interfaith agreement

By Tammi Ledbetter

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — A new venture by the Radio and Television Commission will make it possible for millions of Americans to see Southern Baptist-produced programs previously unavailable in much of the country.

But to some, the price is too high. It's not a matter of economics, critics say, but principle.

"We're getting in bed with the enemy," said one local affiliate of the decision by RTVC to share a channel with Vision Interfaith Satellite Network (VISN) of New York City. The RTVC is the Fort Worth-based broadcasting arm of the Southern Baptist Convention.

While ACTS is carried on 650 cable systems primarily in the South and Southwest, VISN is aired through 712 cable TV systems with strong coverage in the Northeast, the northern tier of central states, and western regions where RTVC has been unable to gain a hearing.

In the news release announcing the VISN-ACTS agreement, Johnson said it will "help all of the faith groups on the two networks to reach the greatest number of people in

America with faith and values programs. The result could be better understanding between faiths and a tremendous influence for good in communities all over the nation."

The official release referred to participation in VISN by Protestant, Jewish, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox faiths. Conspicuously absent was any mention of groups also on VISN which Southern Baptists regard as cultic — Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Unitarian-Universalists. Nor did the release note the inclusion of broadcasts by the National Council of Churches.

Rod Payne of the Wichita Falls, Texas, ACTS affiliate and chairman of the nine-member ACTS Affiliate Council, noted the stiff rivalry between the two religious networks and said, "We have been (urged) by RTVC officials for years that wherever we could we needed to get ACTS on instead of VISN." In some cases, cable operators decided against both networks, avoiding offending religious groups involved on each side.

Payne, for example, whose channel last year was named by RTVC

as "Affiliate of the Year," said, "I don't think I can participate to help pay money to carry Christian Science programs and others on the VISN list."

While affirming the right of other faiths to broadcast their beliefs, Payne said, "I cannot participate in assisting them in the propagation of their gospel.... I cannot in all sincerity participate by sending what I think of as tribute money to pay the VGI folks (support company of VISN) for an affiliation."

Mark Brooks, head of an ACTS board of cooperating churches in Springdale, Ark., one of 150 such boards across the country, predicted many cable operators will prefer the new arrangement because "it's all things to all people." And financially "it's a sweet deal," he said. "It relieves a lot of pressure at the RTVC and, theoretically, they will be able to improve the programming."

But as a local ACTS board leader, Brooks said, "What the RTVC has ignored are the local affiliates." He said he feels ACTS boards were (See ACTS on page 8)

## Fellowship wants to expand missions program for 1993

ATLANTA (ABP) — Early success of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's mission program has prompted mission leaders to expand their plans for 1993.

The Fellowship's missions committee, meeting July 23-24 in Atlanta, approved several new projects — including a half-million-dollar outreach into Albania — and set a goal and theme for the Fellowship's first missions offering.

Already this year, the Fellowship has raised enough money to fully fund its 1992 missions projects, estimated at \$1 million, according to CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman. Mission strategists now are planning to expand the \$2.5 million missions budget established for 1993.

"The sad thing and the joyous thing is we didn't budget high enough," Sherman said. "We will correct that next year."

Sherman described Baptist response to the Fellowship's mission effort as "more gratifying, more generous than we had hoped." Currently 653 Baptist churches are channeling money through the Fellowship, Sherman said, and the roll increases by about 36 churches a

month.

Sherman said many more people have sought appointment by the Fellowship than the organization can afford to hire now. "Getting money to employ them is the great engine that drives us," he said. Almost all are Southern Baptist missionaries dissatisfied with the current direction of the Foreign Mission Board.

Six missionaries, or "missioners" as termed by the Fellowship, already are under appointment by the organization, and CBF leaders say a total of 20 will be on the payroll by early 1993. Expansion of the missions program likely will increase that number.

To fund the expansion, the Fellowship will sponsor a national missions offering beginning this fall. The twice-annual offering will be promoted in the spring and fall.

Sherman conceded the Fellowship's offering will compete with the much larger offerings already conducted by the two Southern Baptist mission boards. "In that one dollar cannot be spent in two places, it is competitive," he said.

But, he added, the Fellowship offering "is not designed to dimin-

ish" the traditional Southern Baptist offerings — the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. "I suspect most of those people who give to us will also give to the other two," Sherman said.

The Fellowship's 1992 offering, arranged around the theme "Keeping the Promise," has a goal of \$2 million. The bulk of the proceeds — \$1.2 million — will support Fellowship's missionaries.

The offering also earmarks \$345,000 for the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, which was defunded by the Foreign Mission Board last year, and \$455,000 for "the hurting, hungry and homeless."

The Fellowship hopes to send four new missionaries to Albania, which only recently opened to Western mission workers. Keith Parker, the Fellowship's missions coordinator for Europe, took a fact-finding trip to the country in July.

Following Parker's trip, members of the Fellowship's global missions ministry group approved plans to spend \$452,000 on the Albania project. (See FELLOWSHIP on page 7)



# Call to service trumpeted in Miss. River area

By William H. Perkins Jr. and Tim Nicholas

(Last of a two-part series)

Baptists attending the Convocation of the Mississippi River Ministry two weeks ago in Memphis were challenged to throw off the old ways of ministering to people in poverty so that more of them can be reached with the Gospel.

The new Ministry is being organized by Baptists in the seven-state region surrounding the Mississippi River to tackle the area's widespread poverty, which is blamed for many of the social ills that hinder Christian evangelism. A recent Home Mission Board study concluded that 50% of the people in the Ministry area are unsaved.

Thomas Tutor, pastor of Oakhurst Church in Clarksdale, provided the keynote sermon. Comparing poverty to prison, he said, "God gave me a vision for men and women in imprisonment."

Tutor referred to Jesus' promise of an abundant life and said that along the Mississippi River, "many don't know even a normal standard of life, much less an abundant one."

Tutor suggested the average church spends 80%-90% of its budget "targeted to reach people in the community who are like those in our congregation." He said members should ask how much is being spent on local ministry and "stop letting people, living in the shadow of the church, die lost. Stop doing your ministry anywhere else but not your ministry at home."

Wilbur Hawkins, former president of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission in Memphis, warned the audience that by the year 2000, 30% of all babies born in the delta area of the Mississippi River will be to

teenage mothers, "... to parents who cannot read or write or understand even the simplest instructions on the front of a cereal box."

Hawkins, the son and grandson of ministers, repeated a theme heard throughout the conference: Baptists cannot do the work alone. He said that to effectively minister, churches need to join hands on an ecumenical basis.

"Every county has a church. Too many of them are closed Monday to Sunday morning," he said.

D.L. Lowrie, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, told participants that "churches are the basic unit in His kingdom strategy. Churches have the responsibility, the volunteers and material resources" to do the job. He added, "If we can, we must."

"We're going to miss out on God's action in history if Baptists don't participate in ministry along the Mississippi," said Nathan Porter, Home Mission Board national missionary for hunger and migrant missions.

Porter read from a long list of spiritual and social problems in the region and then declared, "What a place for a church!"

Comparing the words of Jesus, marked in red letters in many Bibles, to His deeds, which are also important but not marked with special emphasis, Porter drew an illustration that many Christians believe the "red letter edition of our lives" — what Christians say — is more important than what Christians do.

Elmin K. Howell Jr. heads the Rio Grande River Ministry along the 900 mile border between Texas and Mexico. Begun in the fall of 1967, the Rio Grande River Ministry has started 543 churches, four of which have medical clinics.

Last year there were 2,000 professions of faith in the 63 total clinics operated by the Ministry.

Howell said that the only way to change people is to let Jesus Christ change them. "If we try to change them, they may stay changed until the next load of goodies shows up," he said.

Howell said that priority needs identified by leaders in the Rio Grande River Ministry border counties included lay leader training, pastoral training, starting new churches, and maintaining health care services. Many of the same needs have been identified in the Mississippi River Ministry region.

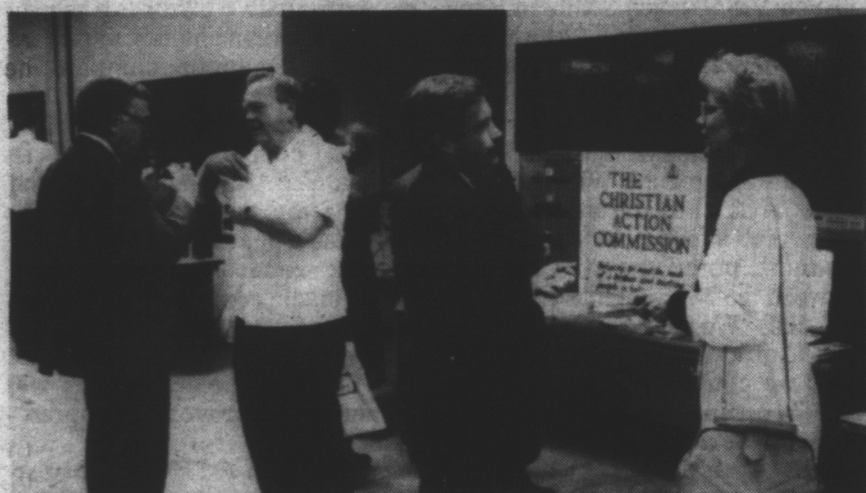
Ray Grissett, director of the Cooperative Missions department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), said his department will "enable, assist, and equip. The church has to identify what it will do and we will

help."

Cautioned Grissett, "Please keep in mind not everybody will buy into this." He suggested that those interested in ministry should "stay prayed up so you won't get discouraged," and to remember that "everyone has a right to know Jesus."

Sponsors of the convocation included the state Baptist conventions in Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee; the Brotherhood Commission and the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; and the Woman's Missionary Union.

Persons and organizations who would like more information or want to get involved in the Mississippi River Ministry can contact Ray Grissett or Richard Brogan in the MBCB Cooperative Missions department at (601) 968-3800.



Paul Jones (left) and Beth Holmes (right) of the Christian Action Commission at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board staff exhibit at the Mississippi River Ministry Convocation Aug. 7-8 in Memphis. Jones discusses the exhibit with an unidentified Home Mission Board employee (second from left), while Holmes talks with Kenny Adams (second from right), minister of music at Mount Zion Church in Independence. Adams served as song leader for the convocation.



Norma Mackey (left), Woman's Missionary Union director for Wayne Association, makes a point at the conference of state Baptists who attended the Mississippi River Convocation Aug. 7-8 in Memphis. Leading the session is Richard Brogan (standing), consultant with the Cooperative Missions Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Mackey also conducted a session at the multi-state convocation entitled, "How To Do Missions With No Money."

## 'Christian nation' sounds good but not true, experts say

By Mark Wingfield

(ABP) — "America was founded as a Christian nation."

It's a popular theme among radio and television preachers and still gets a hearty round of applause in some Baptist meetings. But Baptist religious-liberty experts who will endorse that concept are hard to find.

The slogan might play well in certain places, but it just isn't true, according to Baptists with otherwise different views of religious liberty.

"America was not founded as a Christian nation," said Richard Land, a self-described conservative who is executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

That's a rare point where Land finds total agreement with James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, a religious liberty coalition often at odds with the CLC's position on church-state issues.

"There is no such thing as a Christian state, though all those people in it may call themselves

Christian," Dunn said. "It is impossible for the government to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as its personal Savior. It's an oxymoron."

With that point made, a more subtle parting of the ways comes between Baptists on how to understand America's founding.

Land and other more conservative Baptists like to emphasize the spiritual mindset of America's founders. Dunn and other less conservative Baptists caution that idea can get pushed too far.

"America was founded as a nation that was largely based on Judeo-Christian principles," Land explained. "Most of the founding fathers were people of at least moderate religious conviction. And even those who weren't, like Thomas Jefferson, were operating out of a Christian memory."

Just as America wasn't founded as a "Christian" nation, it wasn't founded as a secular state either, Land said. "We were not founded as a state that would make a dues-

paying member of the ACLU happy."

But Dunn puts less credence on claims that America's founders were devout Christians. The majority were not what modern Baptists would consider "traditional Christians," he said, nor were they members of any church.

"The idea comes from the folklore of American culture in which it is legitimate and true that we have bought biblical values to a degree that no other nation in modern times has done," Dunn explained. "It also comes from the political fueling that has tried to appeal to religion and the always-incestuous marriage of secular politics and religious pietism for political purposes."

Robert Snyder, chairman of the political science department at Kentucky's Georgetown College, expresses a view between those two poles.

While a majority of America's founders may have been Christian, they drafted a Constitution that

would be more of a practical document than a Christian ideology, said Snyder, a Southern Baptist. "Their concern was, 'How can we live together without destroying each other?'"

Oliver Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee, said that rather than a Christian nation, America was founded as a "chartered pluralism."

That means the nation is "a free marketplace of ideas, where religion would be free to flourish on the strength of its own teaching

and truth," he said. "It's the approach I think Jesus took to evangelism: nobody gets coerced to do anything."

On the other hand, "the Bible does say that blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," noted Michael Whitehead, general counsel for the CLC. That means a person's faith ought to make a difference both in private and public decisions, he said.

Wingfield is news director, WESTERN RECORDER, Kentucky.

## Glorieta assembly plans 40-year staff reunion

GLORIETA, N.M. — In celebration of 40 years of service, Glorieta Conference Center in Glorieta, N.M., is asking all of its former staffers to "come on home."

Plans are underway for a "Glorieta Staffers Reunion" to be held Feb. 12-14, 1993, at the confer-

ence center. Scheduled events include a reception, banquet, church service led by ex-staffers, snow skiing, and other activities.

For more information, write: Staffer Reunion, Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, P.O. Box 8, Glorieta, N.M. 87535.



# Baptist churches vulnerable without religious-freedom bill

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Every Baptist church remains vulnerable unless the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is approved by the U.S. Congress, according to a Baptist church-state specialist.

Oliver Thomas, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee, said the bill (H.R. 2797, S. 2969) would protect local churches and their members by restoring a legal standard lost two years ago.

RFRA, backed by a 51-member coalition of religious and civil liberties organizations, would restore the strict "compelling interest" standard the U.S. Supreme Court formerly required government to meet before restricting religious practice. Under the standard, government could restrict religious practice only to protect an interest of the highest order, such as safety or health interests, and if the least restrictive means of safeguarding those interests had been used.

The standard was first articulated by the court in 1963 in *Sherbert vs. Verner* and was reaffirmed in 1972 in *Wisconsin vs. Yoder*. When the high court struck down the test in its 1990 *Employment Division vs. Smith* decision, it virtually abandoned a judicial standard that took more than 100 years to formulate.

In *Smith*, the court rejected the free-exercise principle that it had developed over the century. Since *Smith*, churches cannot be assured of a fighting chance in free-exercise claims, Thomas said, adding that is why RFRA is so important.

Both the Baptist Joint Committee and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission have urged Congress to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Without RFRA, Thomas said, churches will face zoning, tax and anti-discrimination problems.

"Churches have no more zoning protection after *Smith* than do adult bookstores," said Thomas, pointing to the case of *Cornerstone Bible Church vs. City of Hastings*.

In that case, a church sued the City of Hastings, Minn., because it claimed a zoning ordinance excluded churches from commercial and industrial zones. Citing *Smith*, the court ruled for the city, comparing the church's rights to those of adult movie theaters.

Thomas also said *Smith* could pose tax problems for churches. In *Smith*, the court held that generally applicable laws that do not target religion are constitutional. Since virtually all tax provisions are generally applicable laws that do not target religion, Thomas said property, income, sales and use taxes would seem to be constitutionally permissible as applied to religious organizations.

Anti-discrimination laws also will apply to religious organizations because of *Smith*, he added.

For example, a recent Hawaii law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation has been interpreted by the state's attorney general as applying to churches. According to the attorney general's interpretation, the

law does not apply to the selection of ministers but would apply to other staff members. Under this interpretation, a local church could not refuse to hire a potential church secretary or janitor on the basis of sexual orientation.

Another important anti-discrimination case is pending in California. John and Agnes Donahue, devout Catholics, believe sexual intercourse outside of marriage is a mortal sin, Thomas said. Out of that religious conviction, they refused to rent an apartment to a young, unmarried couple.

The couple sued, and the Donahues were ordered to rent to the couple and pay damages. With the compelling interest struck down by the high court, the California Court of Appeals reversed the lower court ruling by using its state constitution. The court concluded that California did not have a compelling reason for forcing the Donahues to violate their religion.

The California Supreme Court has not yet ruled on the case.

"RFRA does not guarantee a favorable result in any of these cases, but it does increase the chances significantly," Thomas said. "In each instance the government would have to satisfy both prongs of the compelling-interest test and, as demonstrated by Donahue, religion often wins."

RFRA has been approved by a House subcommittee and awaits action by the full House Judiciary Committee. The bill was introduced July 2 in the Senate.

## SBC leaders field questions during Jericho town meeting

By Karen Benson

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—During an hour-long "town hall meeting" Aug. 2, about 150 participants of "Jericho '92 — A Southern Baptist Missions Festival" heard leaders of five Southern Baptist entities field questions ranging from the agencies' efforts to settle strife in the convention, to the discrepancy between missionaries' salaries and denominational employees' salaries, to the Brotherhood Commission's plans to involve more men in missions.

Fielding questions were: Larry Lewis, president, Home Mission Board; Dellanna O'Brien, executive director, Woman's Missionary Union; R. Keith Parks, president, Foreign Mission Board; James Williams, president, Brotherhood Commission; and Baptist Sunday School Board staff member Tommy Dixon, who was representing Jimmy Draper, president.

The agency leaders were asked about any plans or strategies to "reach out to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship" and bring the CBF and the rest of the Southern Bap-

tist Convention together.

"I've had some meetings with the leaders, myself," Lewis said. Also, "Our MissionsUSA magazine goes to all the churches, regardless of their affiliation," Lewis said. "I don't know of any way we discriminate against those (CBF) churches."

Out of a recent meeting between representatives of the Foreign Mission Board trustees and WMU executive board members came the request that FMB leaders meet with CBF leaders, Parks reported. The FMB trustee chairman is trying to arrange such a meeting, he reported. "We try to work with all Southern Baptist churches," Parks said.

"I would pray that somehow there could be a coming together," Williams said of the tension between the two camps within Southern Baptist life. "I'm convinced 85% of those in the CBF want a reason to come back home."

O'Brien agreed that efforts by both sides to reach out to the other is needed. "We, like you, would be very happy if we could heal the

divisiveness in our convention," she said. "We will pray toward that end."

The missions leaders also were questioned about recent reports of high salaries of denominational leaders, while "some of our missionaries have barely enough to get by."

"We would all wish that all missionary salaries would increase," Lewis responded. "But the truth is we're having to rely heavily on bivocationalists." Much of the home missions enterprise is being carried out by bivocational workers and Mission Service Corps volunteers, he said.

"Thank God that he's raising up these people," Lewis said. "Let's pray that more and more funding will come."

As to the salaries of agency personnel, he said, "The truth is, in our agency, when we call anyone to a position, we're asking them to take a pay cut. We are way under what is generally considered to be market value."

Benson writes for WMU.



## Friend of the deaf

Southern Baptist missionary Nan Jordan works with some of her students at the Ohta School for the Deaf in Tokyo, where she teaches American Sign Language. To teach American Sign Language in Japan, the teacher must know Japanese as well as Japanese Sign Language. Jordan knows all three. "Part of the challenge with these kids is just convincing them that they can learn," says Jordan. "These kids are smart, but they need more encouragement because they're so far behind their hearing counterparts." She hopes eventually to start after-school Bible clubs for the students. (BP photo by Janice Hicks)

## 'Early birds' get big reward at Oct. Women's Conference

Early-bird attendees of the WMU-sponsored Women's Conference at Mississippi College in Clinton on October 9-10 will be treated to 14 smaller, pre-conference sessions designed with the Women's Conference theme in mind: "Lead on... In My Life, In My Relationships, In My World."

The early bird conferences will begin at 2 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 9, allowing attendees to choose three of the conferences before the evening session of the larger conference convenes at 6:30 p.m. The Women's Conference will adjourn at 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 10.

Early bird conferences include "Woman on the Go: Making Time for Missions" with Karen Simons; "Don't Miss the Blessing: Ministers' Wives" with JoAnn Leavell; "Issues and Answers: Life and Death" with Susie Simons; "Who's Minding the Kids?" with Gwen Williams; "Prayer: My

Church's Missing Link?" with Charles and Indy Whitten; "Integrity in My Workplace" with Susie Jordan; "Today's Teen: Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll" with Cindy Rice; "Letting My Light Shine: Lifestyle Witnessing" with Sue Tatum; "Using My Gifts to Lead" with Stuart Calvert; "My Time: Focused or Frazzled?" with Deborah Brunt; "Rebuilding Your Marriage: A Brick and a Sword" with Helen Price; "Worship and Prayer: A Family Affair" with Evelyn Vaughn; "Relating to My Aged Parents" with Willie Pierce; "Change the World: Your Own Back Yard" with Dottie Williams.

Persons interested in attending the Women's Conference should contact the WMU Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. The telephone number is (601) 968-3800.

## Longtime Mississippi preacher Banks W. Hardy dies at age 72

Banks Wilson Hardy, 72, of Tupelo, died Aug. 5 at North Mississippi Medical Center.

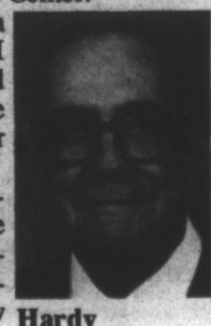
Hardy was a World War II veteran and received the Bronze Star for heroism.

He was educated at Clarke College, Mississippi State University, and New

Orleans Seminary.

During his 40-year ministry, he pastored Antioch Church, Columbus, and Belden Church, Tupelo. He was also volunteer chaplain at North Mississippi Medical Center, and served as interim pastor in Shannon, Aberdeen, and Sherman.

Hardy was elected moderator of the Lowndes Baptist Association and served as president of the Pastors' Conference in Lowndes and Lee counties.







## Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams



### Enroute to Surgut

Surgut, north of the Arctic Circle in western Siberia, is a new city that was built as oil fields developed. It has no church.

Enroute to Surgut from Brandon, Mississippi, are Wayne Stafford, petroleum engineer, and his wife, Betty, who plan to leave here Sept. 5. The mayor of Surgut invited them to come and "share the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The Staffords will show the Russian translation of the film, "Jesus" and for two weeks will distribute Bibles and tracts. "So far as I know," Wayne said, "no Christian missionary has been there before, except Bill Bright of Campus Crusade, last year with this film."

First, though, the two will go to Ufa, farther south, home of Rivener Gabdullin, engineer who came to Jackson last spring to learn more about oil drilling procedures in the USA. For Soviet-American Business Internship Training, he stayed here 4 1/2 months.

Not long after Rivener, a skeptic and a former Communist, arrived in Mississippi, Wayne, an enthusiastic and relatively "new" Christian, handed him a book, *The Scientific Approach to Christianity*.

The curt response: "I have come here to work."

Wayne let the matter drop. Some time later, however, Rivener, in Wayne's office saw a poster of the solar system and began to ask questions: "Is your God the god of the solar system? Does every solar system have a different god? Is your God the same as ours?"

In reply, Wayne began to tell him the story of the Bible in a nutshell, from creation to resurrection. At 5:15, he said, "Come home with me for supper and we'll talk more." He did, and also went to revival meeting with the Staffords at First Church, Brandon.

Later that night, Wayne told Betty, "Get me a Russian Bible. By tomorrow."

That sounded impossible to her.



Betty and Wayne Stafford

However, the Rankin associational WMU president, Mrs. Sam Creel, agreed to help. (Betty is Rankin associational Baptist Women director and Bold Mission Prayer Thrust coordinator.)

Inquiry through Baptist Building resources revealed that First Church, Jackson, had just bought 50 Russian Bibles to mail to the former Soviet Union. But they had already been packed. No, wait! There'd been 51, and one had been left out. The Staffords could have it. "To us that was like a miracle," said Betty. Rivener got it that day.

Since First Church, Jackson's services are televised in Rivener's home city of Ufa, as well as in St. Petersburg, Wayne took Rivener to meet the pastor, Frank Pollard. Also he showed him the "Jesus" film.

Then in a business conference in Texas, Wayne met ten other "Russian" oilmen. At a dinner there, he laid a Russian New Testament by the plate of each man, as a gift. Two took them, but the others, including four Muslims, did not. One, introduced as Anatoly Lashakov, mayor of Surgut, said he was a Christian, asked for more Christian materials, and invited Wayne to Surgut to speak and give his testimony in the schools.

Later Wayne described to

Rivener the American Bible Society's Bible storybook for children.

Came the answer: "That's exactly what everyone in Russia wants!"

"But why would all the adults want one?"

"In matters of religion, all Russians are children."

So Wayne ordered 1,000 of the storybooks at \$3.50 each and paid for them to be published in Moscow in Russian. Soon the Surgut mayor wrote: "I'll send my deputy to pick them up." He'd give them no chance to get lost in delivery!

Though so far as the Staffords know, Rivener had not become a believer before he returned home, he invited Wayne to speak in the schools at Ufa, and is helping to arrange details of the trip. He and his wife, an English teacher, will both assist as interpreters.

"Anyone wishing to have a part in the Bible distribution can do so through First Baptist Church, Brandon," Betty said. Bibles are \$4 each from ABS in Moscow.

Wayne's testimony is an exciting one. Though he had in years past been a "sometimes churchgoer," he was not really a believer until a year or so ago. One night he went to church with Betty; on their return home, he recalls, she was "mad" because of his seeming lack of response at the service. "She threw her Bible down."

"You won't even ask the Lord to change you!" she had told him. "Why don't you just once try asking?" Before he went to sleep, he prayed, in words something like this: "Lord, if you can do this, I want it. Change my way of thinking." That happened. Next morning he was no longer an agnostic. Instead, he said, he recognized a different attitude in himself, and he knew he had become a new creature in Christ. Betty said, "His actions from that day on have proved it." Her prayers had been answered.

Both said they feel their trip to Surgut is a commission from the Lord.

## August commencement set at William Carey College

William Carey College in Hattiesburg conferred approximately 140 degrees at the school's August Commencement, Aug. 15. Larry Braidfoot, Carey academic vice-president, presented the degrees.

Commencement speaker was Joseph M. Ernest III, a Carey graduate and physician now teaching medicine at the Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University in North Carolina. His father, Joseph M. Ernest Jr., vice-president emeritus of Carey, was awarded the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters at the commencement service.

Ernest III is a summa cum laude graduate of Carey, where he completed his undergraduate studies in three years. He was a member of the honors program and several scholastic honorary organizations at Carey. He was also a summer exchange student and is listed in Who's Who

Among American Universities and Colleges. He and his family are active members of Calvary Church in Winston-Salem, N. C.

Ernest Jr. led the academic program at Carey for 20 years. He is a recognized authority on American poet John Greenleaf Whittier, and has served in a number of national and state scholastic organizations. The Hattiesburg chapter of Rotary International awarded him the Hannah Trophy for Outstanding Service, and he has been involved for many years with such charities as Hattiesburg Red Cross, Hattiesburg Heart Fund, United Givers, and Hattiesburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Ernest is a member of First Church, Hattiesburg, where he has served as chairman of the board of deacons, chairman of the nominating committee, and as a longtime Sunday School teacher.

## Orlando pastor Jim Henry speaks to MC's 189 summer graduates

"God has given every person a song to be sung in life," Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla., told the Mississippi College summer graduation in ceremonies at A.E. Wood Coliseum, bringing to a close the 166th regular session of the college.

"The tragedy," continued Henry, "is that many lives never get the song out." He cautioned the graduates not to let this happen to them.

"To get the song out is to know the difference between goals and purpose or mission. Someone has said that a goal is always measurable and can be attained in the framework of time, but a purpose is never fully attainable in this

life," stated Henry.

Henry suggested that "fulfilling God's purpose in your life is to move from being victimized by life to being a victor in life. We all must let the song out."

Of the 189 graduates, 99 were awarded the bachelor's degree, 86 the master's degree and four the Doctor of Jurisprudence from the School of Law.

Summer graduates pushed the 1991-92 graduation total to a school record of 873 people.

Degrees were conferred by Lewis Nobles, president of the College, while diplomas were presented by the vice-presidents or deans of the various schools of the college.



### Ministry Blitz

Puppet shows was one way mission team members shared the message of Jesus with children during Lee County Association's recent Ministry Blitz. Over 300 children were enrolled in the 12 Backyard Bible Clubs held during the association's sixth annual blitz. Teams from Alabama and Kentucky were among 14 mission groups who provided leadership during the week. The other teams included five from across the state and seven from within the association. The blitz resulted in 12 professions of faith. J. C. Prather, coordinator of the event, expressed appreciation to team members, area churches and staff in the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood departments, for their help in making the blitz a success.

## City of Raleigh tells Baptist church to remove Christian flag

RALEIGH, NC (EP) — The city of Raleigh has ordered Neuse Baptist Church to remove its Christian flag, saying the flag violates city code provisions relating to the display of temporary signs.

The church has a garden area with three flagpoles and has been flying the American flag, the North Carolina flag, and the Christian flag. The city code, however, allows only municipal, state, or national flags.

The Raleigh City Zoning Code defines a sign as "Any temporary or permanent identification, description, animation, illustration, or device...which is visible from any right-of-way...with the exception of state, municipal or national flags."

James Eldridge, the attorney representing Neuse Baptist Church, said the church will file a civil suit on the matter. Since he has not yet filed the suit, he did not want to

discuss details, but he said the church's arguments "will rest on the church's faith, beliefs, and convictions that it has the right to display the Christian flag, and... it is preparing to initiate litigation to safeguard that right."

Eldridge said the church believes that the order conflicts with the Christian faith and it sees no alternative but to obey God. The Christian Law Association of Conneaut, Ohio also is involved in the case.



# HOUSE TOPS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Matthew 10:27 NAS

August 20, 1992

HOUSE TOPS is a supplement to the **Baptist Record** and is produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

## Sunday School Worker Enlistment Can Be a Fulfilling Experience

by Randy Tompkins  
MBCB, Sunday School Department

This is the time of year when most churches have a group of people that do not appear very happy. This group is known as the Nominating Committee. It is the time of year when this group is trying to "fill those worker slots" in the organization of the church. Here is a suggestion that will help make this work more interesting and fulfilling for the Nominating Committee.

Before all the Sunday School workers have been enlisted for the new Sunday School Year, consider having a Sunday School Worker Appreciation Banquet. Besides giving the Sunday School workers a meal, acknowledge some special things that have happened throughout the year. Workers could be recognized for attending training events, participating in regular workers meetings, or having a personal attendance ratio above 80%. Other Sunday School workers might be recognized for participating in the outreach program of the church or for bringing new people into the Sunday School. The class and/or department secretaries might be recognized for the excellent work they have done. The recognition needs to be more than simply saying thank you to the entire group and then having a guest speaker. The recognition needs to point out the work of individuals with emphasis given as to how that work helped the Sunday School.

The Sunday School appreciation time is also a very good opportunity to place before the workers goals, dreams, and proposed actions for the new Sunday School year. This information can help a worker see they are needed and important for the new Sunday School year. Following the worker appreciation time, the Nominating Committee should visit with each worker individually. This could be a time of encouragement and enlistment.

For more information about a workers appreciation banquet or an appreciation time in a worship service, contact the Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

HT



*In My Life  
In My World  
In My Relationship*

## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Mississippi College Coliseum  
Clinton, Miss.  
October 9-10, 1992



Cynthia Clawson



Jeannette Clift  
George



Dellanna O'Brien



Joyce Landorf  
Heatherly



Lynne Cheney

Registration begins at 10:00 a. m. Friday  
Early bird conferences begin at 2:00 p. m. Friday  
Evening Session begins at 6:30 p. m.

**COST: \$20.00 per person (includes lunch on Saturday)**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 1**

*Sponsored by the Woman's Missionary Union  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board*

For information on registering, contact Cindy Coon • WMU • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205 • 968-3800



# Lay Missions Conference

Selecting your ministry  
in the Marketplace

Prisoners

Poor

Children

Functional  
Non-reader

Lost

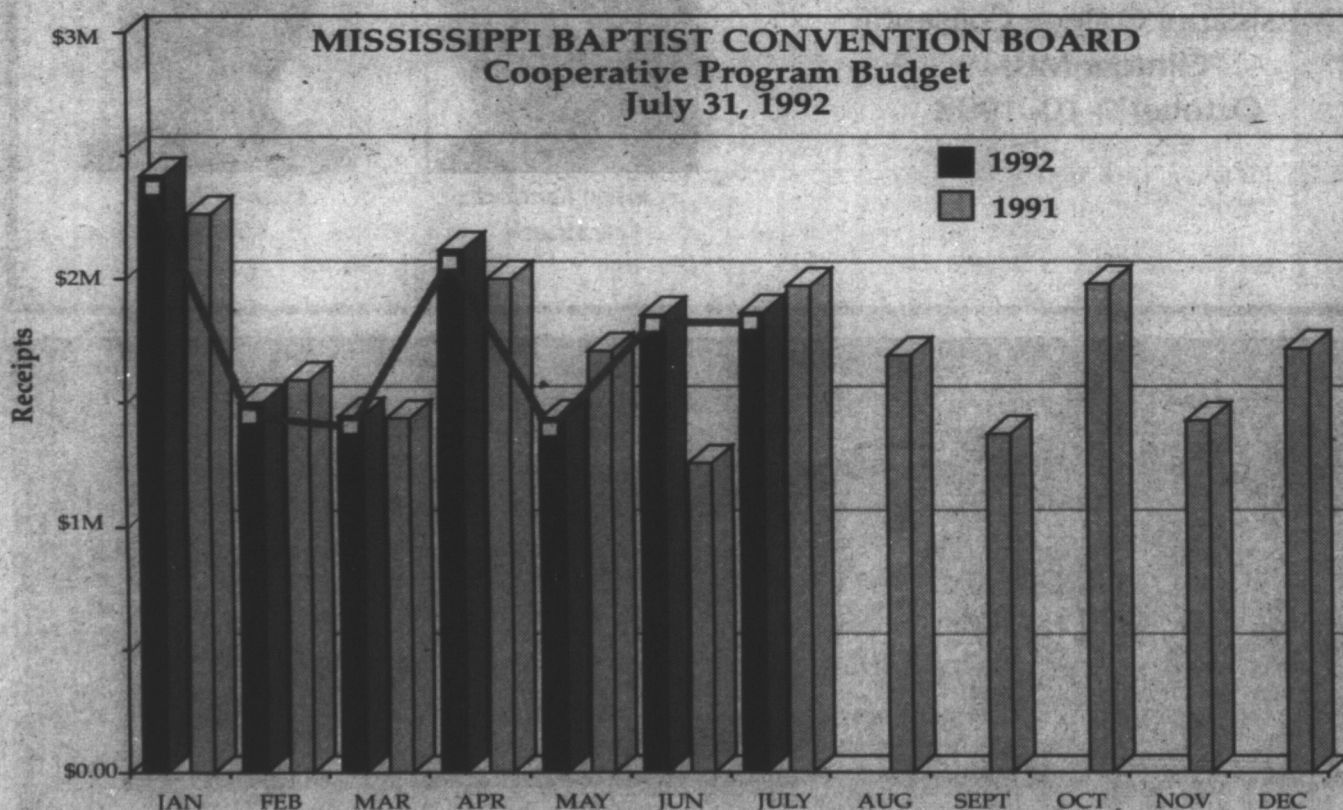
**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI**

November 9, 1992

Sponsored by  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

For more information on being a part of the  
Lay Missions Conference, contact the Brotherhood  
Department • MBCB • at 968-3800

The purpose of the Lay  
Missions Conference is  
to help explore ways to  
extend Christ's Kingdom  
through the concept of  
Marketplace Ministry. If  
we are to win Mississippi  
and the world to Jesus in  
our generation, it is sig-  
nificant that each of us  
become marketplace  
ministers.



## Learn the secrets of intimacy with God

You can enjoy a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord. *Disciple's Prayer Life: Walking in Fellowship with God* is a 13-session Lay Institute for Equipping (LIFE) course that can teach you how to —

- develop a richer prayer life;
- discover the unique way God relates to you;
- use the Bible in prayer;
- express gratitude and worship God;
- pray with a partner;
- deal with guilt and agree with God on your needs and His actions;
- apply eight principles of asking;
- deal with unanswered prayer and hindrances to prayer;
- pray for yourself, others, and missions;
- develop a prayer ministry and continue growing in fellowship with God.

Study *Disciple's Prayer Life* in your church. Resources include *Disciple's Prayer Life* notebook (item 7232-18) and optional videotapes (item 8432-68).

Order from Customer Service Center; 127  
Ninth Avenue, North; Nashville, TN  
37234; 1-800-458-2772.



**DISCIPLESHIP  
TRAINING**

**HOUSE TOPS**



## MISSISSIPPI PRAYERGRAM

August 20-Sept. 2, 1992

**P**ray that the goal of \$17,000 for the Bolivian home missions offering will be met. These funds will be used to open new work in several areas and to sustain home missionaries.

**P**ray for the literacy committee in Ghana (West Africa) as they write, print, and test primer books for teaching the Mamprusi people how to read and write in their own language.

**P**ray for Elias Bitar, the Lebanese principal of the Beirut Baptist School, who has had to deal with many high-pressure situations. Pray that he and his family can continue to share Christ's love in the midst of a predominantly Muslim neighborhood and school.

**P**ray for the Miami Baptist Association. In March prayer was requested for two churches (Anglo and

Hispanic) that were to start in the Metro West Detention Center. The churches have started and NBC has filmed the ministries. Pray that NBC will use the film. Also pray for a satellite hookup so that video Sunday School can extend from one detention center/ county jail to all seven detention centers in Dade County.

**P**ray for Herman Chacon, pastor of the Ogden Hispanic Mission in Ogden, Utah. Pray that he can control his diabetic condition and have the energy and strength to continue the full responsibility of the work. He has known of the diabetic condition for three years.

**P**ray for Jerry Wortman of Canada who is a catalytic missionary working with North American Indians. Pray that an Indian work can be established in Calgary, Alberta, this year. Calgary is the location of our Baptist Seminary.

**P**ray for the Associational Officers Training meetings: FBC, Oxford, Aug. 22; FBC, Brandon, Aug. 24; FBC, Winona, Aug. 25 and FBC, Columbia, August 27. The Association and trained leadership

are so very important to the work Baptists are doing in Mississippi.

**P**ray for the 75 people who made professions of faith and the 167 others who made decisions at the 1992 Youth Night at the Mississippi Coliseum on July 24, 1992. Thank God that this year's Youth Night, an annual event sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, drew a bigger crowd than a recent concert by a popular rock-n-roll group.

**P**ray for Mississippi's participation in a new Home Mission program that hopes to enlist 250 Southern Baptist churches to sponsor five or more church missions by the end of 1995. This is known as the "Key Church Program."

**MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST  
PRAYERLINE  
969-PRAY**

# ASSOCIATIONAL OFFICERS TRAINING

**AUGUST 22** (Saturday) - FBC, Oxford, 9:00 a.m. - noon (no meal)

**AUGUST 24** (Monday) - FBC, Brandon, 5:45 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. (light supper)

**AUGUST 25** (Tuesday) - FBC, Winona, 5:45 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. (light supper)

**AUGUST 27** (Thursday) - FBC, Columbia, 5:45 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. (light supper)

*The following conferences will be offered:*

- **DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS**
- **MODERATOR**
- **ASSOCIATIONAL CLERK**
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL:**

General Officers  
Directors  
Adults  
Youth  
Children  
Preschool directors  
(No outreach, VBS, or  
Teaching Improvement)  
Media Library Director

- **DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING:**

Directors  
Age-group leaders  
(No Bible Drill, recreation)  
Family Ministry: All directors

- **EVANGELISM:**

All directors

- **BROTHERHOOD:**

All directors

- **WMU:**

All directors,  
plus a study of the book,  
"With a Servant Heart"

- **MISSIONS DEVELOPMENT:**

All directors

- **STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR**

- **PASTORAL MINISTRIES  
DIRECTOR**

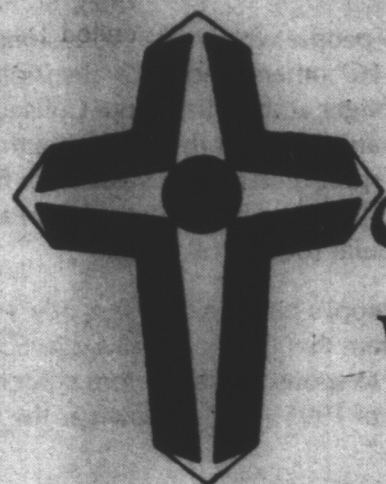
- **PRAYER THRUST  
COORDINATOR**

- **CHRISTIAN ACTION  
CHAIRMAN**

- **MUSIC:**  
All directors

For registration information contact your associational office or call Don Wilson at 968-3800





## SPANISH *MasterLife* WORKSHOP

PRIMERA IGLESIA BAPTIST MISSION  
Gulfport, Mississippi

Rev. Miguel Gonzalez, Pastor

October 5-8, 1992

Write or call for information: Rev. Gonzalez, 2235 Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi, MS 39532-3804, phone 385-2452; Jim Dalrymple, Gulf Coast Association, phone 832-4311 or Mose D. Dangerfield, Discipleship Training Department, Jackson, MS, phone 968-3800, ext 3883.

### ***Materials for 1993 Bible Drill/Speakers' Tournament***

*May be ordered by returning the order form below to:*

***Discipleship Training  
Box 530  
Jackson, MS 39205-0530***

### **1993 BIBLE DRILL/SPEAKERS' TOURNAMENT Request for 1993 Materials**

CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send me the following number of pamphlets:*

\_\_\_\_\_ Children's \_\_\_\_\_ Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Leader's Guide

### **Lottery Fact . . . Not Fiction**

Paul Jones, executive director of the Christian Action Commission, reports that there is some confusion on the part of Baptists concerning the voting on the lottery on Nov. 3.

Technically, says Jones, whose office has become an information clearing house on gambling issues, voters will not actually vote on whether Mississippi will create a state-operated lottery. "The only vote that any private citizen will get to make on the lottery is whether or not the current constitutional prohibition against a state lottery will be deleted or retained," says Jones.

If the voters delete the prohibition, it would be the legislature which would consider any state-operated lottery.

"As you share this information with colleagues, friends, and acquaintances, you will find many who will join the growing ranks of Mississippians who care about the future of our state and will vote against a state-operated lottery," says Jones.

Jones adds that people must be registered in order to vote and that one must be registered in the current county in which they live. "If we are to win the lottery vote on Nov. 3, every person eligible to vote must be registered," says Jones.

A person must be registered at least 30 days prior to an election. This means that the last day to register in person at the voter registrar's office in one's county is Saturday, Oct. 3, from 8 a.m. to noon.

Under a new law, a person may register by mail at least 60 days prior to an election. A person can receive a form in the mail from the voter registrar's office, complete it, have it signed by an already registered voter, and return it to the voter's registrar's office.

Churches are allowed to hold voter registration drives. For details on how to do this or for samples of the mail registration form, contact the Christian Action Commission, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, phone 968 3800.

HT

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# HOUSE TOPS



# National Big Brother misses White House for mission

By Tim Nicholas

David McNair of Brandon could have visited with President Bush in the Oval Office, but missed his chance. Instead, McNair, a member of First Church, Jackson, was in Kazakhstan, doing volunteer missions.

McNair had been named National Big Brother of the Year by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America for his work as Big Brother to 10-year-old Josh Cashion. But the award presentation by the President took place at the end of April when David was in the middle of a six-week stint in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan. And he couldn't leave his work there for the trip to

Washington.

Josh got his trip to see the President anyway, traveling with a Jackson area Big Brother staffer. Josh reported to David concerning the President, "Gee, he's tall." And Mr. Bush affirmed to Josh that he did, indeed, know where Kazakhstan is.

Both David and Josh attended the Big Brother/Big Sister convention in Indianapolis. They traveled from Jackson by train. And this October the two have been invited to New York to attend the National Hero Awards program which honors American heroes and benefits Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.

ers/Big Sisters of America.

The purpose of being a Big Brother is to provide a positive role model for young people, particularly where there is only one parent present. David has taught Josh to swim. And when the family's home burned last year, David provided moral support.

Himself single, David directs a single adult Sunday School Department at First Church, Jackson. He is a former volunteer of the year for the Mississippi Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, and he reads the *Copiah County Journal* for Mississippi public radio's network for the blind.

David traveled at his own expense to Moscow with travel to Kazakhstan and local expenses paid by the institute where he taught. His appointment was processed through the Foreign Mission Board's Cooperative Services International.

David, who owns a mini-storage business in Jackson, taught at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management and Economics, conducting

small business training. The institute was formed at the instruction of the president of Kazakhstan to teach free market principles and set up a graduate program in economics, including an MBA program.

"I taught private enterprise in a free market, bank financing, and marketing," among other topics, says David. He did a case study of a carpet factory that was in the process of privatizing and a furniture company that was the first privatized under the new law. The people in the classes included the heads of the agro-industrial complex.

Once he was invited to speak to the newly elected leaders of the regional and local Soviets — which are a type of city and state council. "They wanted me to speak on state and local governments. I also talked about county government which they had no knowledge of," says David. The group must have liked what he had to say, because the group invited him to speak to their bosses, mem-

bers of the Supreme Soviet, the country's congress. The Supreme Soviet, which has 360 deputies was not in session, but 60 members and staff attended David's talk.

Although it is not permitted to preach the gospel on the streets, one can give out Bibles. And while there, David saw Pat Robertson on television along with a program on the Ten Commandments. David had opportunities to share his faith. "You don't go as a missionary, you go as a business person," says David. "It is lifestyle evangelism" where people would ask questions about religion and David would freely answer. Once asked a tough question about biblical justice, David responded, "I'm not a theologian, I'm under the new covenant."

Said David, "You find out you are a part of a long process of people who had gone before and come behind you." He adds, "You are building on what someone else has done."



David McNair, right, of Brandon, was named National Big Brother of the Year for 1992. He is pictured with his little brother, Josh Cashion.

## American Christians giving less, churches keeping more, study finds

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (ABP) — American Christians continue to give an ever smaller percentage of their income to churches, and a decreasing percentage of what they give goes beyond the church to benevolent and missions causes.

That's the finding of John and Sylvia Ronvalles, co-authors of a new independent report, "The State of Church Giving through 1990."

With a grant from the Lilly Endowment, the Ronvalles have tracked giving patterns from 1968 to 1990 in 31 U.S. denominations, including the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1990, giving as a percentage of income reached a 23-year low among these 30 million church members, they found.

This indicator has been sliding slowly downward since 1968, when church members on average gave 3.05% of their income to their churches. By 1990, that had decreased to 2.60% of income.

The Ronvalles' study also examines the effects of economic recession on church giving. They conclude that there is no clear pattern to equate the beginning of a recession with a decrease in church giving.

However, they warn that decreasing financial stewardship among church members could be a contributing factor to America's current social condition.

"If the church has been a guardian of basic values that benefit any society — such values as 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control' — and if the level of support the church receives from its members has been declining, then it might not be unreasonable to conclude that there would be negative consequences experienced in... American society," they state in the report.

And that, in turn, could feed the

increasing trouble churches have paying their own bills, they add: "Given that caring for others has been an organizing principle of the church from the beginning, the church may have to consider whether it will ever be able to pay its bills if it has no challenging vision around which to organize."

"The answer to that question could be part of the solution to church giving patterns, and may even be part of the solution to the current social anxiety that seems to be affecting American society," they conclude.

## GA Plus One weekend set, Sept. 11-12

Girls in Action have planned a weekend at Camp Garaywa, Sept. 11-12, for any age GA group plus one adult — mother, grandmother, GA leader, or friend.

The GA Plus One Weekend will begin Sept. 11 with 4 p.m. registration. Supper will be at 5:30. The program will include missionaries, games, adventure course experiences, Bible study, and devotional times. The weekend will conclude Sept. 12 at noon.

Cost for the weekend is \$21 per person, which includes three meals, lodging, and insurance. Each GA and adult needs to bring bed and bath linens.

Preregistration for GA Plus One is going on now at Camp Garaywa. Deadline for reservations is Sept. 4. No refunds will be given after that date. To register, call Camp Garaywa at (601) 924-7034.

## FELLOWSHIP

From page 3

ject — \$240,000 on personnel, \$200,000 on support programs, and \$12,000 to help Russian Baptists establish their own mission in Albania. The Albanian project is being coordinated with the European Baptist Federation.

Other overseas projects approved by the CBF's global missions group in July include:

— A partnership with European Baptists to help the former Soviet republics employ church starters — \$100,000.

— Funds for hunger and emergency relief in Europe, distributed through the European Baptist Fed-

eration — \$100,000.

— Funds for an EBF project to aid the children of Chernobyl.

— Support for a mission to aborigines through the Aboriginal and Islander Baptist Council of Australia — \$50,000.

Unlike the Southern Baptist Convention, which has separate agencies to conduct foreign and home missions, the Fellowship handles both overseas and stateside missions through one body, its global missions ministry group, which is co-chaired by Jean Bond of Starkville.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was established last year by Southern Baptist moderate-conservatives displeased with the current leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies.

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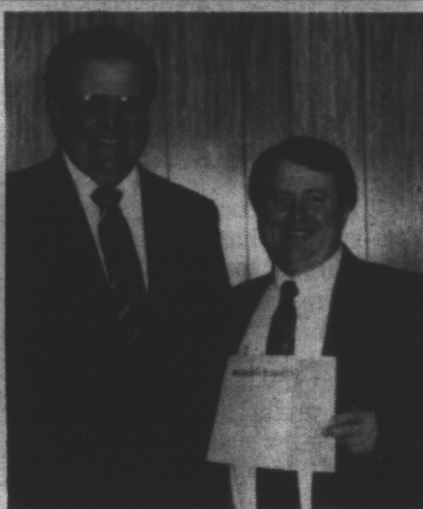
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# Names in the news



Jim Dalrymple, left, associate director of missions, Gulf Coast Baptist Association, is shown presenting a certificate to Coy Webb, pastor, Niles Ferry Church, Greenback, Tenn., in appreciation of that church's youth group. The youth group was one of nine from Kentucky, Alabama, Louisiana, Delaware, Tennessee, and Oklahoma (along with local churches) that conducted Backyard Bible Clubs on the Coast.



West Ripley Church ordained Randy Smith (left) to the ministry. Smith presently serves as pastor of the Mt. Hebron Church, Benton-Tippah Association. Shown with Smith is Billy Baker, pastor.

Stephen C. Reynolds has been named president and chief executive officer of Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis, effective Oct. 1. A native of Little Rock, Ark., Reynolds was educated at Arkansas State University, and Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Mo. He is a member of First Church, Memphis.



West Ripley Church recently licensed Brannon Rushing (left) and Stanley Huddleston (center) to the ministry. Both are available for supply work. At right is Billy Baker, pastor.



Dean Timbes, right, was recently honored by Hillcrest Church, New Albany, for his 10 years of service as pastor. Bill Cousar, right, chairman of deacons, is pictured presenting Timbes a plaque and monetary gift.

## ACTS

From page 3

"blindsided" by the agreement to cooperate with VISN and reduce ACTS programming to eight hours per day. "There is not one affiliate that I've talked to who thinks this is a good idea, who is excited about this."

Brooks said viewers in northwest Arkansas identify the ACTS channel with local Baptist churches and the SBC at large. The sudden appearance of 16 hours of VISN programming is a mixed signal his church and ACTS board will not risk, he said.

"I will pull the plug on ACTS, sell my TV equipment, and get off the air before I will have the programming of VISN and identify ourselves with these groups," Brooks said. "When the WMU ladies find out we're in bed with the Mormons and Muslims, the RTVC is in for a big backlash on this."

RTVC public relations director Steve Gregory said those with apprehension about the other programming should see this as "an opportunity to let ACTS penetrate these markets where people haven't seen our programs before." And in areas where ACTS is established, Gregory said the tie to VISN will "strengthen the width and breadth of our penetration in the market. Catholics who have not watched ACTS in the past may turn over to it" after watching a VISN program

they're familiar with.

One condition of the agreement, and a policy of ACTS from its beginning, is that ACTS programming may not malign any religious belief or faith group. RTVC's Gregory says the clause would likely prevent "a Baptist preacher from standing up and saying Mormons are absolutely wrong — that constitutes a breach of the clause."

The VISN arrangement, Brooks said, may be the only way Southern Baptists will ever "get into the big leagues" of broadcasting.

Brooks added, "The VISN people aren't any more excited about getting in bed with us than we are them. We've got Jerry Falwell."

Ledbetter writes for INDIANA BAPTIST. Art Toalston also contributed to this report.

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## Homecomings

Holly Grove, Braxton: Aug. 23; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; singing, 11 a.m.; covered dish lunch, noon; afternoon singing and fellowship, 1:30 p.m.; Roger Lee, pastor.

First, Yazoo City: Aug. 23; 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Keith Parks, president, Foreign Mission Board, guest speaker; covered dish lunch, activities building, noon; Diplomats quartet, Jackson, guest singers; Clifton Perkins, interim pastor.

Short Creek, Yazoo City: Aug. 23; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Rudolph Paine, Vicksburg, guest speaker; J. B. and Glendara, music; covered dish lunch, noon; afternoon singing; Norris Ables, pastor.

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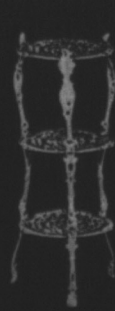
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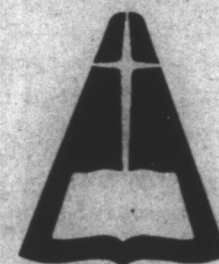
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# Just for the Record



First Church, Lucedale, recently held its first Acteen recognition service in five years. Acteens recognized and their crown bearers are pictured, left to right, front row: Lindsey Rea Cowart, Shelly Martin, Robby Holmes, John Russell O'Neal, Stephanie Schultz, Eric Platt, and Lindsey Gardner; back row, queens, Brandy Barrow, Jeana Conner, Amy Holland, Alison O'Neal, Jennifer O'Neal, Robin Platt, and Ashley Turner. Marcia Dixon is Acteens director; leaders are Alice O'Neal, Linda Holland, and Debra Wilson.

Rolling Hills Church, a mission church in Pearl River Association, is building its first building. Bruce Campbell is pastor. They are putting up sheetrock and interior insulation. The church has hired out the bricking but could use volunteers for anything beyond this point. Contact Bruce or Jill Campbell (601) 798-9756.

Andrew Culverwell, a British-born composer and Christian solo artist currently residing in Nashville, will be in concert at First Church, Crystal Springs, Aug. 23, 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken. For more information, call the church office at (601) 892-1149.

First Church, Sumrall, will hold a summer Bible conference Aug. 23-26. John Phillips of Raleigh, N.C. will be the Bible teacher. Bobby Shurden of Hattiesburg will lead music. Services will be held Sunday, 10 a.m., and 7 p.m. nightly.

David Ring of First Church, Orlando, Fla., will be at Canaan Church, Columbus, for a one-night rally Aug. 25 at 7 p.m. Ben Yarber is pastor.

Everett Church, Mendenhall, will dedicate its new church building, Aug. 30 at 11 a.m. Guest speaker will be Terry Runnels of Mendenhall. Others on program will include the Thornton Family and the Shepherds of Love. Dinner on the grounds will be served at noon. William A. McWilliams is pastor.

Griffin Street Church, Moss Point, will hold a pastor recognition day Aug. 30 in honor of Athens and Dorothy McNeil. The McNeils have served the Griffith Street congregation for 20 years, and will retire Aug. 31. The recognition day will include special program and dinner on the ground.



Members of First Church, Louisville, formed a medical mission team for a volunteer effort in Honduras, July 11-25. The effort was spearheaded by Michael Ard, area physician, and included nurses, pharmacists, and a dentist. Shown above are FBC members packing vitamins for the mission.

## Revival dates

Center Grove (Lauderdale): Aug. 23-27; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m. nightly; Gary Bowlin, Brandon, evangelist; Edd Holloman, pastor.

Military Church, Sumrall: Aug. 23-28; Sunday, homecoming, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Gerald Aultman, Hattiesburg, guest speaker; lunch in fellowship hall; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m. nightly; Alan Woodward, Ellisville, evangelist; Alan Carlson, music; O. B. Robertson, pastor.

First, Hattiesburg: Aug. 23; 6 p.m.; "Joy of Victory," one night revival; David Ring, evangelist.

First Church, Lyman, Gulfport, will host the musical group "Southern Cross" Aug. 29 at 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

Fannin (Rankin): Aug. 23-25; Sun. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m.; Maurice Clayton, Jackson, evangelist; Keith Stephens, pastor.

Beulah Church, Inverness: Aug. 23-26; Sunday, 11 a.m.; lunch at noon; 7 p.m. nightly;

Billy Murphy, Laurel, evangelist.

Greenfield Church, Greenville: Aug. 23-28; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 11:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Danny Prater, Inverness, evangelist; Kenneth Forbus, Greenville, music; Ed Campbell, pastor.

Heucks Retreat, Brookhaven: Aug. 23-26; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, Jackson, evangelist; Louis Oswalt, Clinton, music; Greg Potts, pastor.

Sandersville (Jones): Aug. 30-Sept. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m.; 7 p.m. nightly; Perry Neal, Montgomery, Ala., evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, Agricola, music; Donnie Parker, pastor.

## Agri-Missions team will meet, Yazoo City

The annual summer meeting of Agricultural Missions Foundation, Limited, will be held in the Mississippi Chemical Corporation boardroom, Aug. 28, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. A lunch will be served.

The highlight of the meeting this year will be a presentation by agricultural missionary Ron Baker, who serves in Indonesia. Baker's home state is Arkansas. He received the bachelor's and master's degrees from Arkansas State University. He was appointed as an agricultural evangelist by the Foreign Mission Board in 1982.



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## Uniform

### Serve the Lord faithfully



By Margaret H. Rogers  
2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

Paul's imprisonment could not dim his faith in Christ, in the Word of God, nor his desire to serve. Chains could never hamper the powerful Word as Paul continued his faithful ministry. Though Paul was languishing in a cold dungeon, chained like a common criminal, he could still tell Timothy how to live and how to serve God. Nothing could lull Paul into neglecting God and his purpose for life. He knew his work was done and his life nearly over, so he had special reasons for writing this last letter to Timothy.

Paul was so lonely, deserted by his friends, and he had a strong desire to see Timothy. He was concerned about the welfare of the churches during the time of persecution under Nero and he admonished Timothy to guard the gospel, and, if necessary, to suffer for it. Paul wanted his requests and greetings delivered to the church at Ephesus. Even in the face of his circumstances, there is no hint of regret from Paul that he had given his life to the service of God. There was no hint of doubt that the church would ultimately triumph. This letter is the exultant cry of a dying conqueror.

**Paul's own example (vv. 10-13).** The apostle's life and ministry are worthy for others to follow. Persecutions and troubles had befallen him. Yet he saw the Lord's deliverance, so he patiently endured. He warned Timothy that evil men and impostors would grow worse and worse in the difficult seasons preceding Christ's return.

**The role of Scripture in Timothy's life and service (vv. 14-17).** There were so many positive forces at work in Timothy's life. The foundations of his Christian faith were the great truths on which he had built and would maintain his life. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God revealed his person and plan to godly men, who wrote down his message by the process of inspiration. The writers wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural context the things God wanted them to write. Scripture is completely trustworthy because God was in control and his words are completely authoritative for man's faith and life.

**Paul admonishes faithful service (4:1-5).** It was important for Timothy to preach the gospel so that the Christian faith could spread throughout the world. The task would be difficult, but it was the most important responsibility assigned to the church. Paul admonished Timothy to be courageous and sensitive to every God-given opportunity to tell the good news. He warned him that many would not listen to his message. Yet, he was to use his knowledge of God's word to pass the truth on to others. Paul encouraged him to serve God in full measure, to completely discharge his service to maximum effectiveness.

Paul's word to the church at Corinth seems to echo this message to those who would serve well and faithfully. Note the words found in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (NIV).

The Christian's love for God and his reverence for God's Word are best expressed in his daily life and the faithful service he renders. These words of Paul should challenge each Christian to examine the example he projects, demonstrated in the kind of service and the faithfulness exhibited in completing the tasks God has assigned to each.

Rogers is a member of Salem Church, Collins.

## Bible Book

### God's protection and mercy



By David Raddin  
2 Kings 18:4-5; 19:15-20, 34;  
20:3-5

God's protection and mercy are undeserved gifts that come out of his grace. We cannot earn grace any more than we can buy love. God does in his power what is impossible in our human strength. Facing and overcoming life is possible only through the Lord. "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

**King Hezekiah's reformation in Judah (18:4-5).** Hezekiah was a good king. He honored the Lord and did what was right in his sight. "There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him" (v. 5). Hezekiah ruled Judah for 29 years, heeding the advice of the great prophet Isaiah.

In his first year as king, Hezekiah reopened the doors of the temple of Jehovah, which Ahaz had closed. He removed the high places, the centers of idol worship. He broke to pieces the Nehushtan, the bronze snake Moses made, because the people of Judah worshipped it as an idol.

Hezekiah trusted in the Lord. He led the people to worship the true and living God. He invited all of Israel and all of Judah to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover. The feast was so successful that it lasted two weeks. The joy in Jerusalem was greater than any time since Solomon's dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 30:1-27).

Hezekiah is an example of true faithfulness to God. As we live in a world filled with worship of things and people other than the Lord, may we renew our commitment to stand for the things of God. In every situation may we be found faithful.

**Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance from Assyria's threat (19:15-19).** Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked and captured the cities of Judah and threatened to capture Jerusalem. He sent a message to King Hezekiah ridiculing the other nations who had prayed to their gods and ridiculing Hezekiah for thinking his God could deliver him and his people. Hezekiah was greatly distressed and prayed to the Lord for deliverance.

How often we are attacked by life and ridiculed for believing in the power of prayer. The Lord is greater than any problem. He understands our distress and our need for deliverance. Take the burdens and fears of your life to the Lord in prayer. "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

**Isaiah's prophecy of God's deliverance (19:20, 34).** Hezekiah turned to the prophet Isaiah for counsel during the Assyrian threat. Isaiah brought word to Hezekiah that the Lord had heard his prayer. The word of the Lord came against Sennacherib.

The Lord gave two reasons for defending and saving Jerusalem. The first reason was for his sake. Sennacherib had boasted of his power over God. The Lord confirmed himself as the true and almighty God.

The second reason was for David's sake. The Lord kept his promises to David (cf. 2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 11:36; 2 Kings 8:19, 20:6). God honored his long-term commitment to his people.

The Lord hears our prayers. Nothing is too small or large to bring to him. God honors his promises to you and me.

**God heals Hezekiah's sickness (20:3-5).** Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. Isaiah told him that the Lord had said to put his house in order, because he was going to die. Hezekiah prayed with his whole attention on the Lord. He did not specifically request healing, but reflected on his faithfulness and devotion to God. He wept bitterly. The Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer, saw his tears, and granted him 15 years of life.

God brings all healing. His grace is not based on our perfection, but on his love. Whether the healing you need be physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, or something else, bring your needs to God who will hear your prayer.

Raddin is pastor, First Church, Summit.

## Life and Work

### Proclaim God's faithfulness



By Milton Burd  
2 Samuel 23:1-5, 1 Kings 2:1-4

David learned as a shepherd boy that he could depend on God. David experienced God's faithfulness throughout his life as king of Israel. Even in his disobedience, David found God faithful to confront him with his sin. Here David approaches the final days of his life, and reflects on all that God had done. This lesson is about proclaiming God's faithfulness, and that is exactly what David was doing.

**God's work in David's life (2 Samuel 23:1-2).** David was perhaps making his final official statement as king of Israel. He identified himself in four ways: the son of Jesse, the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed, and Israel's singer of songs. God chose this son of Jesse as a "man after his own heart" and anointed him to be Saul's successor. God exalted David by raising him up to be king of Israel. David was also a skilled musician and was responsible for many poems (Psalms) used in the worship of the Lord of Hosts. This self-description by David reflected his sensitivity to God's leadership in his life. Throughout his years of service, he was always willing to recognize God's blessings and faithfulness as the source of his strength. In his final words, David wanted to reveal what God had spoken to him.

**Service that pleases God (2 Samuel 23:3-4).** David identified God as the Rock of Israel, a symbol of strength and power. God has all power to stand behind his promises and be faithful to his people. With a God like that, David ruled Israel righteously in awe and reverence. A king who has a right relationship with God can rule justly and honestly with his people. He can help them to thrive as a nation. Indeed, Israel reached its golden age during the reign of David. A king like David is like sunshine after rain that makes everything grow and prosper.

People today in places of responsibility can be a bright ray of hope when they serve under God's leadership.

**Results of obedience to God (2 Samuel 23:5).** David asked a rhetorical question in verse 5, but he was implying that his house was right with God. He made reference to the covenant that God had made with him in 2 Samuel 7. That covenant was confirmation of David's relationship with God. This relationship was based on God's grace and not on David's perfection. The covenant promised that David's kingdom would last forever. This covenant reflected God's strength and faithfulness. God would keep his promises if David and his descendants remained obedient and faithful. An obedient king and a faithful God make for an effective reign. We also can benefit from such a relationship. If we serve obediently, God will faithfully guide us in his work.

**Admonition to obey God (1 Kings 2:1-3).** David issued a final charge to his son Solomon shortly before his death. Solomon was to succeed his father as king, and David wished for him the same righteous relationship with God. David's admonition to Solomon was to be strong and to be a man in the sense that he would follow God's way and be faithful to keep his commands (the law of Moses). David told Solomon that he would prosper if he would faithfully serve him, but others are blessed, too.

**God's promise to David (1 Kings 2:4).** David reminded Solomon of the covenant that God had established with him (2 Samuel 7). He stressed the conditional nature of the covenant. It was now his responsibility to continue the covenant relationship and be faithful to God. Solomon's faithfulness would continue David's line on the throne of Israel forever (a long period of time). Even though David's successors failed in being obedient to God, the stage was set for the coming of the messianic King, Jesus Christ. He would be the example of the perfect, obedient and faithful king.

It is our responsibility to faithfully encourage our children and others to trust and obey God. Our faithful service confirms the promises of God and encourages others.

Burd is minister of education, First Church, Cleveland.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



## The Baptist Children's Village

Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

P. O. Box 27,  
Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
(601) 922-2242

ACCREDITED



## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of the Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

June 1, 1992 -  
June 30, 1992

### MEMORIALS

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Mr. & Mrs. Dan W.  
Southernland, Jr.  
Nathan Mattison  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W.  
Southernland, Jr.  
Mr. A. H. Mauldin  
Miss Eleanor Odom  
Miss Arlin Upchurch  
Mr. "Shine" Maxey  
Mrs. Katie Kemp  
Mr. G. G. McAlpin  
First Baptist Church  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Hasselman  
Mr. Gabriel McAlpin  
American Assoc. of Retired  
People  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry K. Woods

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Mrs. Aubrey Abel  
Mrs. Sidney B. Thornton  
D. E. McCaa, Jr.  
Ms. Dorothy P. McCaa  
Nellie Williams  
Mrs. Flois McCarty  
First Baptist Church  
Mrs. Mary McClurg  
Mr. & Mrs. L. K. Bell  
Mr. Albert McCraw  
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Kolb  
Ray McCullough  
Mr. & Mrs. T. C. Pettet  
Mr. Jim McDade  
Mrs. Jane H. Bailey  
W. J. McDade  
Mrs. Margaret M. Gully  
Sandra McDaniel  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Mrs. Kathryn Cooper  
Shelton McGeehee  
Mrs. Joan McKee  
Mr. Clinton McGeehee  
Liberty Baptist Church  
Karl McGraw  
Mr. & Mrs. John Nowlin

Lloyd Farrington McGraw  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry C. Hall  
Mr. R. W. McKay  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W.  
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Ms. Marguerite K. Bond  
Innis McLeod  
Mrs. Robert L. Cross  
Mr. Gregg McMin  
Mr. & Mrs. Myron Johnson  
Bryan McNeer  
Mr. & Mrs. Pat Ingram  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Magee &  
Children  
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Magee &  
Children  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmie D. Magee  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Wachter  
Mr. Sam McQuirter  
Mr. & Mrs. Werner Woods  
Ruby Riser Michael  
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Roy Kennedy  
Mrs. Mary Middleton  
Mrs. Berry R. Givens  
Mr. James Miller  
Mr. & Mrs. Owen D. Jones

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Mr. & Mrs. Pat Denmark  
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Col. & Mrs. Robert W.  
McDonald  
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Mr. & Mrs. Myrl McCormick  
Mary Ward Quinn  
Mr. & Mrs. F. O. Alldread  
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Dorothy McCaa  
Mrs. G. L. Williams  
Colean Ray  
Yale Street Baptist Church  
Luther Ray  
Yale Street Baptist Church  
Roland Ray  
Mr. & Mrs. Elwood Crain  
Miss Elva Gardner  
Ms. Jeanne Smith Tapp  
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Wesson Baptist Church  
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B. L. Richardson  
James and Virginia King  
Mr. George Richardson  
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Jr.  
First Baptist Church  
Mrs. Thelma Richmond  
Galilee Baptist Church  
Jennifer Ellis Rigdon  
Mr. & Mrs. Owen D. Jones

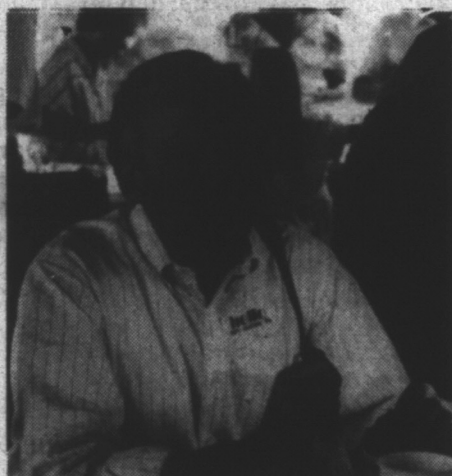
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Mr. & Mrs. Clark Mashburn  
Ruby Mae Burrow Roberts  
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L. C. Smith  
First Baptist Church  
Mrs. Evie Elizabeth Smith  
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Patricia M. Kimble  
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Mr. A. C. Sumrall  
Mr. & Mrs. Reese Snell  
Mr. Bobby Thames  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry A. Stewart

(To be continued)

## Village Alumni meet, elect officers

The 1992 bi-annual Alumni meeting of the Baptist Children's Village and Baptist Orphanage was held Saturday, August 8. Officers for the coming term were elected. They are: Chrystelle Thames, President; Mike Jefcoat, Vice President; Henry Glaze, Secretary. Following the formal meeting, lunch was served at the Pavilion. There was much fellowship and rekindling of old friendships. The next Alumni meeting will be the second Saturday in August, 1994.





# Laurel Baptists combine visions to maximize Honduras ministry

By Ronney Joe Webb

Three different visions combined to maximize ministry in the small village of Esquias, Honduras, on a recent mission trip.

Pharmacist William Wells and dentist Bob Holifield led a group from First Church, Laurel, on a medical/dental mission. The mission was sponsored by Baptist Medical/Dental Mission International, based in Petal.

Independent missionary Charlie Herrington started this medical/dental mission to meet the needs of rural villages in Honduras. Holifield started sending groups of dentists and doctors to Honduras to minister to physical as well as spiritual needs.

Herrington died six years ago, but his vision lives on in Baptist Medical/Dental Mission International. For nine months each year, this mission, under the direction of



Antha Estridge (left) of First Church, Laurel, presents a Spanish-language Bible to a Honduran woman. (Photo by Terri Webb)

missionary Earl Elkins of Laurel, sponsors groups from all over the United States that meet the needs

of thousands of Hondurans.

During the 1991 trip, dental assistant Antha Estridge of Laurel saw a need for Spanish Bibles to be given to new Christians. Anticipating her return to Honduras in 1992, she raised money to purchase 400 Spanish Bibles, which she distributed during the trip in July of this year after each worship service and at the medical/dental clinic.

Antha was moved by emotion when demand exceeded supply, and with God's help she will raise more money for Spanish Bibles before next year's return trip.

Ronney Joe Webb, activities minister at First Church, Laurel, also had a vision on the 1991 trip. After discovering that many Central American countries want to learn more about baseball, he attended several RecLab seminars on using sports in missions. He spent many months collecting donated equipment and, with the help of Mike Gonzalez, youth minister at First Church, Laurel, he put together a youth team to teach baseball in Honduras.

On the trip in July of this year, Ronnie and other mission workers led morning and evening baseball sessions for over 300 people. By the end of the week, games were being played with the young nationals. The Gospel was shared during each session by Mike, who speaks Spanish, and by Ronney, who used a translator.

The baseball equipment was donated at the end of the trip to the village school.

"We did more than teach baseball skills; we shared the Gospel with young people who would not have attended worship services," Ronney said.

Webb is minister of activities at First Church, Laurel.



Casey Stead (left) of Highland Church, Laurel, and dentist Dwight Hastings (second from left) of First Church, Laurel, prepare a Honduran man for dental work at the medical/dental clinic. (Photo by Terri Webb)

## Honduras mission trip ...

### A little clay pot

By James Buie

I walked to a little store on the outskirts of the village of El Olingo. I was searching for the house of Inez Ardon, a maker of clay pots. I had seen her work in a market place near the center where we were working. Her work was simple and without decoration, but well-done and so typical of what villagers made. I wanted something done by someone from that particular village. The owner of the little store pointed up the street to the Ardon house. I let myself through the gate and waved to a man standing in the yard. He motioned me in and introduced me to his wife.

A parrot fussed at us from a beam under the roof of the porch. I stated the purpose of my visit. She led me into her kitchen/workshop. All the floors were hard-packed dirt. All the pieces on the table were greenware. They had yet to be fired in the kiln, the mushroom-shaped oven out in the front yard that also served for baking bread.

There was nothing available to purchase at the moment. Mrs. Ardon said, "Would you please look at my mother and see if something can be done for her?" The elderly woman could hardly lift her swollen feet off the bed. There was not even an aspirin to relieve her pain. I promised to ask the doctor to visit her.

Later that week, the doctor, the pharmacist, and a nurse went with us back up the hill to the Ardon house. The proper medicine was prescribed for Mrs. Ardon's mother. The doctor shared her faith with the family. We prayed with them. We were about to depart when Inez stepped forward and presented me with a piece of her pottery. She had gone to the little store that sold her wares and brought back the little pitcher to give to me... to remember them by.

I thanked her, the parrot fussed a bit, and we moved away down the hill.

Buie is pastor, Westview Church, Jackson.

## Crises force missionaries to agonize over safety

By David Williard

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The world is in crisis. In Asia, mountains collapse, swollen rivers sweep away frantic creatures. In Africa, disease races on the heels of famine. In Latin America, insurgents violently stake out turf. In the Middle East, political discontent incites faction against faction.

Chances are, Foreign Mission Board personnel, watching events unfold and waiting for opportunity to minister, are running the risk of being caught in the middle.

What precautions can missionaries take to protect themselves and their loved ones?

The Foreign Mission Board permits career missionaries to make the complex decision of remaining or evacuating in the face of potential crisis. (Consultation with and sanction of, if possible, the area director is required.)

In many cases, situations that appear as crises to outside observers are seen as relatively non-threatening to missionaries. Although evacuations are highly visible, FMB administrators say missionaries most often elect to stay in potential "hot spots."

Several factors can lead to missionaries' sense of security, despite the presence of insurgency around them. The two most often cited are being in God's will and the protection provided by the care of local populations among whom missionaries live and serve.

In fact, in two 1990 evacuations — from Jordan and from Liberia — several missionaries left only when local Baptists encouraged them to do so.

In Liberia, according to missionary John Carpenter, many Southern Baptist personnel left only after local Baptists cautioned they no longer could ensure the safety of the Americans. In a situation such as Jordan, missionaries were at risk primarily due to anti-American sentiment.

But seldom are the dangers to missionaries as real as they appear when Western media magnify solitary incidents. Missionary Ellis Leagans serves in Colombia, where drug cartels and terrorist groups have been waging what, in effect, are private crusades against established authorities. He suggests the greatest part of missionary stress for some resulted from family members in the United States hearing things on broadcast networks that did not account fully for the actual situation.

Referring to typical coverage of terrorist incidents, he said, "Occasionally I wondered if I was living in the same city they were talking about."

Board administrators emphasize missionaries are to be politically neutral. The policy has been credited with preventing many missionaries from being targeted for harassment; in some cases, missionaries have been in a position to witness equally to members of

opposing groups.

"We go in with the idea that we're not going to have political sufferings," says Gerry Volkart, the board's associate area director for the Middle East and north Africa who, as a missionary, experienced evacuation from Jordan. "Missionaries are reminded that they are in a location exclusively as Christian representatives," she says.

Many missionaries have experienced violence on the field that has happened on a non-personal, non-political basis. They generally recognize there is a level of danger involved in living in any location.

"We live in a world where there are few safe corners," says Betty Kay Yamaoka, the board's associate area director for west Africa. "Part of the missionary calling is to be a risk-taker."

Coinciding with terrorism in Peru is "a lot of criminal activity" affecting residents and missionaries alike, Dixon says. His wife, May, endured a harrowing experience three years ago when four armed men forced her to stop her vehicle.

She was taking equipment and food supplies to the Baptist camp at Shiran at the time. The trip, undertaken frequently, required her to travel some 30 miles into the Andes Mountains from the Dixons' home in Trujillo. This time, her two teen-age daughters were with her.

"When it did happen, God gave them total peace," Dixon reports. "They knew he was in control even if it did mean death." The bandits only stole the food and equipment.

Sometimes children become a complicating factor. Just as the presence of children may influence missionaries to leave a dangerous situation, concern for the safety of their children has caused some not to go back and numerous others to delay their return.

Williard is assistant editor, COMMISSION magazine, FMB.

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